

# Tips & Tricks

## FOR YOUR LITTLE ONE

Feeding children is tough! As caretakers, we want the best for our little ones. Follow these tips and tricks to get your child off to a healthy start!



### Healthy Eating, Healthy Life

Children grow at a rapid rate and need a variety of nutrients to help their bodies grow and develop. Even if your child refuses foods that are healthy, it is important to keep offering a variety of healthy foods. Your child will eat what is offered. If you offer healthy foods, he/she will eat healthy foods. Make sure your child gets needed nutrients by:

- **Mixing it up!** Offering even 1 new food can provide nutrients your child may need. If you have leftovers, pair them with different sides like new fruits or vegetables.
- **Planning Ahead!** Plan to include fruits and vegetables with each snack. A snack can be a mini-meal with 2-3 food groups. This can ensure your child gets nutrients he/she may not be getting if a meal is skipped.
- **Counting it All!** Beverages contribute to your child's calorie intake. Offer healthy beverages. If your child doesn't like water, try adding ice cubes, serving it with a straw, adding a small amount of juice, or even fresh fruits and vegetables to give it some flavor.

### Fluid Facts:

**Children 1-3 years of age need 4 cups of fluid/day. Five cups per day is needed for 4-5 year-olds. This includes milk, juice, and other beverages.**



**Did You Know?** You can limit the amount of sugar your child gets by offering less than 4 oz. of juice per day and offering nothing but water between meals.

### Picky Eating or Figuring Food Out?

Nagging, bribing, or forcing your child to eat can lead him/her to over-eat and ignore hunger signals. Allow your child plenty of time to figure out new tastes, textures, and skills.



Caregiver's Role:	Child's Role:	Family's Role:
<b>Decide What to Eat:</b> Offer healthy foods. Establish your role by deciding what to offer and what to buy.	<b>Choose How Much to Eat:</b> Some days it might be a lot. Other days, it might seem like nothing. That's okay. Help your child learn to listen to his/her body.	<b>Eat together:</b> Be a good role model. Provide opportunities for your child to see you and others eating healthy foods.
<b>Choose When to Eat:</b> Most kids need 3 meals and 2-3 snacks per day. Grazing all day decreases the amount eaten at meals.	<b>Which of the Foods Offered to Eat:</b> Forcing a child to eat can increase resistance. If your child chooses not to eat a certain food, serve it again for the next snack.	<b>Set Table Limits:</b> Young children have short attention spans. Have your child sit no longer than 5-10 minutes per snack and 10-15 minutes per meal.
<b>Pick Where to Eat:</b> Limit distractions by turning off electronics and removing toys from the table.	<b>Learn About Food:</b> Smelling, touching, and talking about food may make your child more familiar and more likely to eat what they've learned about.	<b>Make Mealtime Enjoyable:</b> Talk together. Practice sitting, listening and exercising developmental skills at the table.



## The Truth About Vitamins

Most children do not need a vitamin supplement or nutritional drink. Even if children are not good eaters, the body will often store nutrients. Talk with your healthcare provider if you have concerns. Offer a variety of foods. See the chart below for foods that provide nutrients especially important in children.

Nutrient	Amount Recommended	Role	Found In
<b>Vitamin D</b>	600 IUs/day after 1 year of age	Helps in calcium absorption, important in bone health	Milk, fatty fish, mushrooms, and cereal
<b>Iron</b>	7 mg/day for ages 1-3 10 mg/day for ages 4-5	Carries oxygen to red blood cells, aids in brain development	Meat, seafood, poultry, iron-fortified cereals & grains, beans & lentils
<b>Fluoride</b>	0.7 mg/day for ages 1-3 1 mg/day for ages 4-5	Decreases risk of dental caries (cavities)	Water & some toothpastes. Some cities add fluoride to their water. Check the nutrition label of bottled water and toothpaste for fluoride

### Did You Know?

Communities with fluoride in the water have been shown to have lower risk of tooth decay by 25%.



Toothpaste with fluoride is recommended as soon as the first tooth comes in. Use a tiny smear (the size of a grain of rice) if your child is less than 3 years of age. A pea-size amount is recommended for ages 3-5.

Need a dentist? Visit [insurekidsnow.gov](http://insurekidsnow.gov) to find a provider in your area.



### Work It Out! Fun Physical Activity Tips:

- **Dance, Dance:** Turn on some music and get moving!
- **Birds of a Feather:** Have your child act like an animal by flapping his/her arms like a bird, jumping like a kangaroo, or slithering like a snake.
- **Sock Hop:** Scatter some socks on the floor and have your child hop from sock to sock.
- **Balance Beam:** Place a piece of tape, string, or cut-up paper in a line on the floor. Your child can walk, jump, and twist while balancing on the line.
- **Musical Chair:** Pick an activity for your child to do around a chair while you sing/play music. When the music stops, race your child to the chair.

### Is This Normal? - Bowel Patterns in Kids:

Some children have a bowel movement 1-2 times/day. Other kids may have a bowel movement every 3 days. This is normal.

**Symptoms of constipation:** several days without normal bowel movements, hard stools passed with difficulty, stomach pain, rectal bleeding.

**Symptoms of diarrhea in children over 1 year:** More than 3 watery stools/day.

**What you can do:** Keep your child hydrated by offering them water frequently. Offer high-fiber foods like fruits and vegetables with skin, beans, and whole-grains. Speak with your healthcare provider about your child's bowel patterns.

Information adapted from: "Mealtime Routines and Tips" *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. "Where We Stand: Vitamins," "Constipation in Children" and "Diarrhea." *The American Academy of Pediatrics* and 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

